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IDEA earns Rome employee \$10,000 prize

by Fran Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — A suggestion to change the way in which video teleconferencing is provided has earned an Air Force Research Laboratory employee a \$10,000 award from the Air Force Innovative Development through Employee Awareness (IDEA) program.

Gregory J. Howe, a telecommunications specialist in the AFRL Information Directorate's Communications and Computers Branch, will receive the award for his proposal to utilize new AFRL Rome Research Site switching capabilities to connect its teleconferencing facility.

Our teleconference facility has been utilizing a dedicated circuit provided by AT&T," said Howe, a 25-year federal employee. "By installing interface cards in our new communications switch, we can eliminate the \$7,787 monthly charge for the dedicated circuit. The new process will require only the cost of long distance calling; however, since most of the site's video teleconferencing involves military bases, those calls can be made without charge via the Defense Switching Network (DSN)."

The Rome Research Site anticipates saving \$77,608 during the first year, after deducting the cost of new interface cards for the new telephone switch that was installed in December 2001. Savings in subsequent years are estimated at \$83,803 annually.

Howe added that there are an estimated 250 Air Force sites around the country that could use similar changes in video teleconferencing communications. Altering switches at those sites could result in an annual savings in excess of \$20 million. @